



# Medicare Low Vision Rehabilitation Demonstration (LVRD)

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## How to Participate: A Guide for the Eye Care Physician



This presentation was developed in collaboration with the following organizations: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP), American Optometric Association (AOA), Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), and the National Council of Private Agencies for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCPABVI).



# Why Learn About the LVRD?

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- **Low vision patients can benefit from vision rehabilitation.**
- **You can make a difference in the quality of a patient's life by recommending vision rehabilitation services.**
- **Medicare is ready to cover these rehabilitation services now under the low vision rehabilitation demonstration!**
- **As a leader in the eye care field, you can spread the word to your colleagues.**



# An Invitation Letter to Participate

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*Dear Eye Care Professional,*

*You are quite aware that loss of vision can be the most devastating event in a person's life. This is especially true in the elderly. Vision loss leads to a whole host of additional burdens to an individual, including safety concerns, loss of independence, depression, and withdrawal.*

*Eye care physicians apply their knowledge, skills and training in an effort to preserve the patient's vision and quality of life. However, when vision loss is significant medical interventions alone sometimes are not enough to assure patient safety and independence. This is when physicians must explore additional therapies.*

*Low vision rehabilitation is an excellent adjunct to your clinical interventions by helping your patients adjust to their vision loss and maintain a high quality of life. You can refer your patient to a certified vision rehabilitation professional or licensed occupational therapist who can provide the necessary training to the patient.*

*We urge you to consider vision rehabilitation as one of the interventions available to you and to your patients. This presentation will describe what Medicare will cover and help guide you through the steps you can take to continue to provide the best care possible to your patients.*

*Sincerely,*

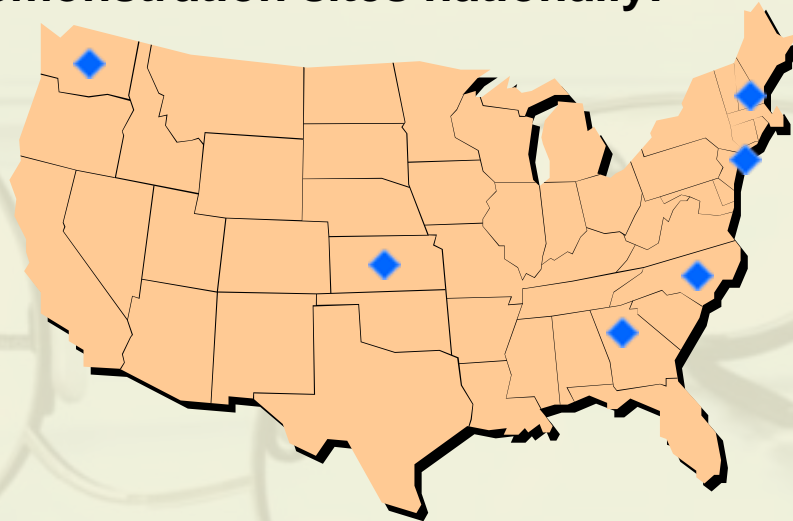
*The CMS Low Vision Rehabilitation Demonstration Outreach Team*



# LVRD General Overview

- The LVRD runs from April 1, 2006 through March 31, 2011.
- There are 6 demonstration sites nationally:

- ◆ Washington
- ◆ Kansas
- ◆ Greater Atlanta Metropolitan Area



- ◆ New Hampshire
- ◆ Greater New York City Metropolitan Area
- ◆ North Carolina

- Success of the LVRD is dependent upon the participation of:
  - Eye care physicians
  - Vision rehabilitation specialists
- Both consumer need for these services and the availability of rehabilitation specialists to provide these services is necessary.



# LVRD Purpose

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- **Under the LVRD, Medicare will provide reimbursement for rehabilitation services of qualified vision rehabilitation specialists:**
  - ACVREP certified vision rehabilitation professionals
  - occupational therapists
- **Eligible Medicare beneficiaries can obtain vision rehabilitation services to maintain independence and quality of life according to their individual abilities and needs.**
- **Services can be provided in appropriate settings, including in the home, without the need for the optometrist or ophthalmologist to be present (general supervision).**
- **Medicare is looking to determine whether reimbursing for services provided by an additional category of providers under general supervision is more beneficial to the beneficiary, and if medical eye care professionals will utilize these covered services.**



# LVRD Eligibility



## Who are the eligible beneficiaries?

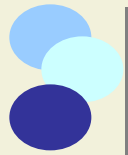
- Covered under Medicare Part B fee-for-service, and not participating in a Medicare managed care plan
- Residing in 1 of the 6 demonstration locales
- Have a medical diagnosis of moderate to severe vision impairment that cannot be corrected by glasses or surgery

## Who are the eligible providers?

- Any qualified ophthalmologists and optometrists
- ACVREP certified low vision rehabilitation professionals
- Qualified occupational therapists
- Qualified rehabilitation facilities
- Must be practicing in 1 of the 6 demonstration locales







# Important Notice To Eye Care Physicians

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- **ANY qualified ophthalmologist or optometrist with a Medicare provider number can utilize this coverage for their eligible Medicare patients, regardless of your practice model.**
- **You do not necessarily need to be a low vision provider.**
- **All you need is a patient who can benefit from rehabilitation and the desire to offer it to them.**



# Who Are Qualified Rehabilitation Specialists?

## Occupational Therapists (OT)

- Use therapeutic activities, environmental modification, and compensatory strategies to enable persons with vision impairment and other disabilities to complete daily living activities both in the home and within the community.
- Conduct assessments of global function.
- Provide therapies guided by individual patient goals that incorporate the use of adaptive and optical devices.
- Therapy is initiated with a physician order.

## Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS)

- The goal of a COMS is to assist with the restoration of safe movement skills after vision is decreased or lost.
- Safe movement involves relearning how to use spatial and environmental clues, and how to move about using all senses.





# Who Are Qualified Rehabilitation Specialists?

## Certified Low Vision Therapists (CLVT)

- The goal of a CLVT is to maximize the positive use of reduced vision by restoring visual functioning to the greatest extent possible.
- Alternate strategies for visual tasks are taught, including use of prescribed low vision devices, use of remaining vision, and use of non-visual techniques when appropriate.



## Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (CVRT)

- The goal of a CVRT is to restore safe functioning in all areas of daily living after vision has decreased or been lost.
- Strategies include alternate methods for reading or writing, home safety, clothing identification and organization, and food preparation.



# LVRD Services Offered

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- Vision rehabilitation services provided by occupational therapists (OTs) or ACVREP certified vision rehabilitation professionals under a written plan of care.
- Currently, up to 9 hours of vision rehabilitation services over a 90-day period to a patient with qualifying level of visual impairment. Effective April 2008, this will increase to 12 hours of vision rehabilitation services each calendar year, without a consecutive 90-day requirement.
- Vision rehabilitation services delivered in appropriate settings, including in the home, face-to-face, and one-on-one.
- Occupational therapists (OTs) in private practice can submit their own claims for vision rehabilitation under the demonstration and be reimbursed directly.
- Medicare will reimburse the supervising physician for rehabilitation services provided by qualified vision rehabilitation specialists.



# LVRD Participation Requirements

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- **Qualifying patients must reside in, and the provider of services must practice in, 1 of the 6 demonstration locales.**
- **Physician providing general supervision must certify a plan of care that includes instructions on what kind of rehabilitation a qualified vision rehabilitation specialist will perform.**
- **Physician reviews plan of care every 30 days.**





# 5 Easy LVRD Participation Steps

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- 1. Identify which of your Medicare patients has a medical diagnosis of moderate to severe vision impairment that cannot be corrected by glasses or surgery, including blindness.**
- 2. Determine the specific vision rehabilitation services that your eligible patient needs.**
- 3. Consult with a qualified vision rehabilitation specialist to write a 90-day plan of care.**
- 4. Submit claims using the correct codes just as you would for other Medicare-covered services.**
- 5. Arrange to pay the qualified vision rehabilitation specialist for the services ordered through the plan of care (occupational therapists may be able to bill Medicare directly).**

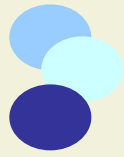


# Establishing Medical Necessity

- **The eye care physician (optometrist or ophthalmologist) must establish that the patient has a medical necessity for low vision rehabilitation services.**
- **As determined by the physician, a comprehensive eye exam and/or a low vision exam should be performed.**
  - Some or all of the exam services may be reimbursable by Medicare.
  - Contact your Medicare carrier to determine which specific eye exam services are covered by Medicare.
- **Additional information about how to perform a low vision exam can be obtained from**  
[www.lowvision.org/what occurs in a low vision exam.htm](http://www.lowvision.org/what_occurs_in_a_low_vision_exam.htm) and for your patients at [www.afb.org/seniorsite.asp?SectionID=63&TopicID=290&DocumentUD=3210](http://www.afb.org/seniorsite.asp?SectionID=63&TopicID=290&DocumentUD=3210)







# Identifying Appropriate Rehabilitation Services

## Determine Rehabilitation Services for Your Patient

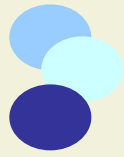
- Assess the rehabilitation needs of your patient.
- Upon completion of the assessment, a plan of care can be established.
- An occupational therapist can assist with this process.
- Medicare will reimburse for an occupational therapy evaluation under the therapy code 97003.



## Establish a Plan of Care

- The physician does not necessarily have to write the plan of care but the physician must certify that it is appropriate.
- The supervising physician must review the plan of care at least every 30 days.
- The plan indicates the patient's diagnosis, anticipated goals, and specifics for the type, amount, frequency, and duration of rehabilitation services.





# How Does Medicare Reimburse for Rendered LVRD Services?

- The supervising physician, qualifying rehabilitation facility, or OT in private practice submits a claim to their usual Medicare carrier as they would for all other covered services, using the appropriate LVRD G-Code (below).
- ACVREP certified low vision rehabilitation professionals must have arrangements with a supervising physician or rehabilitation facility for payment of his/her services.
- Rehabilitation services are billed in 15-minute time increments.
- The special G-Codes used for billing vision rehabilitation services under the LVRD are:

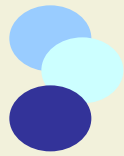
Qualifying Rehabilitation Specialist	LVRD G-Code
Occupational Therapists (OT)	G9041
Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists (COMS)	G9042
Certified Low Vision Therapists (CLVT)	G9043
Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (CVRT)	G9044



# You Can Make a Difference!



- **Approximately 5.5 million men and women age 65 and older are blind or visually impaired.**
- **Vision rehabilitation services can help your patients:**
  - Gain independent living skills
  - Improve their communication skills
  - Increase their mobility
- **CMS challenges YOU to connect your patients with services that can make a real difference in the quality of their lives.**



# **Additional Information & Resources**

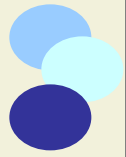


# About ACVREP Certification



- **The Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) certifies:**
  - Low Vision Therapists
  - Orientation & Mobility Specialists
  - Vision Rehabilitation Therapists

**who are all university-prepared and hold a Bachelor's degree, at minimum.**
- **ACVREP certificants work with your patients who have or are experiencing vision loss, and protect them by assuring high quality standards.**
- **Applicants must meet rigid eligibility criteria, and pass ACVREP's national examination. The renewable certification is valid in 5-year increments.**
- **ACVREP certificants' services are uniquely and specifically identified as reimbursable in the Medicare LVRD.**



# ACVREP Contact Information



- **For additional information regarding ACVREP, or to identify certificants with whom you can work, please contact:**
  - Sharon L. Mikrut, at 520-887-6816 or [smikrut@acvrep.org](mailto:smikrut@acvrep.org)
- **Correspondence to ACVREP should be directed to:**
  - ACVREP, 3333 N. Campbell Ave., Suite 11, Tucson, AZ, 85719
- **ACVREP's Website provides a wealth of information regarding its three certification programs, eligibility criteria, recertification options, and more. ACVREP is fully registered with the National Certification Commission.**
  - [www.acvrep.org](http://www.acvrep.org)

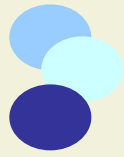


# AOTA Resource Information

- **The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) provides additional information about low vision services of occupational therapists (OTs).**
- **AOTA can be contacted at:**
  - 301-652-2682
  - AOTA, 4720 Montgomery Lane, PO Box 31220, Bethesda, MD 20824
- **AOTA's Website can be used to identify a State Occupational Therapy Association that can assist with locating OTs in the 6 LVRD locales.**
  - [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)
    - Choose "Your State Association"





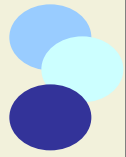


# Other Resources for Locating Qualified Rehabilitation Professionals

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- **American Academy of Ophthalmology** ([www.aao.org](http://www.aao.org))
  - Choose “Find an Eye M.D.”
  - Select “Low Vision Rehab” in Subspecialty under desired search option
- **American Academy of Optometry** ([www.aaopt.org](http://www.aaopt.org))
  - Choose “Fellow Directory”
  - Enter location and select “Low Vision Section” and “Clinical Diplomates” (Type)
- **American Optometric Association** ([www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org))
  - For additional information, call 1-800-365-2219 extension 4225 or
  - Choose “Find an Optometrist”
  - Enter “Zip Code” and select “Low Vision Rehabilitation Section”



# Other LVRD Resources & Information

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- [www.cms.hhs.gov/DemoProjectsEvalRpts](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/DemoProjectsEvalRpts)
  - Choose “Medicare Demonstrations”
  - Select “Medicare Low Vision Rehabilitation Demonstration” (2006)
- **Contact the CMS LVRD Project Officer at [visiondemo@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:visiondemo@cms.hhs.gov)**
- [www.lowvisionproject.org](http://www.lowvisionproject.org)
  - Register with the Low Vision Rehabilitation Network (LVRN) to gain access to information about the LVRD, including the 2/22/06 and 9/20/07 archived broadcasts by James Coan
- [www.cms.hhs.gov/MedlearnMattersArticles](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MedlearnMattersArticles)
  - To access details about claims submissions or to locate contact information for your regional Medicare carrier
- [www.cms.hhs.gov/DemoProjectsEvalRepts/MD/list.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/DemoProjectsEvalRepts/MD/list.asp)
  - To view a list of applicable zip codes for the Greater New York City and the Greater Atlanta metropolitan areas demonstration sites